

Fall 8-15-2001

## ENG 3009G-006: Myth and Culture

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Martone.  
 English 3009G.  
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Office: 3751. Hours: MWF 11:00-12:00  
 and by appt.

#### Course Description.

We will take semiotic approach to myth as "language" as we discuss texts, art, music, and film from a range of cultures.

#### Texts.

Allen, *Without Sanctuary*, <http://www.journale.com/withoutsanctuary/main.html>  
 Chan, Wing-Tsit, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*.  
 Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners*, <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html>  
 Ellison, *Invisible Man*.  
*Fluxus Portal*, [www.fluxus.org](http://www.fluxus.org)  
 Kerouac, *On the Road*.  
 Meyeroff, *Peyote Hunt*.  
 Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*.  
 Nguyen, *Tale of Kieu*.  
 Powers, *Yuwipi*.  
 Rhodes, *Outsider Art*.  
 Robinson, *The Debt*, [http://www.will.uiuc.edu/WILL\\_Content/AM\\_Focus\\_580\\_Webcasts.htm](http://www.will.uiuc.edu/WILL_Content/AM_Focus_580_Webcasts.htm)  
 Sanders, *Gilgamesh*.  
 Snyder, *No Nature*.

#### Requirements and Evaluation.

***Regular attendance and participation.*** (You will be allowed 2 absences. I will lower your final grade by one letter for each unexcused absence thereafter.)

***Hourly examinations and take-home assignments.*** There will be about 5 in-class examinations, consisting of short answer questions on our assigned reading, and an essay question. They **WILL NOT** be announced in advance. You can (and need) only "prepare" for them by preparing for class. Make-up examinations will not be offered, but a short may be substituted for *one* examination. I will also ask you to complete several short papers/assignments. Extensions will not be granted for these. (70% of grade.)

***Final examination.*** This will consist of a short-answer component and a 5-page essay, the latter to be written in advance of the examination day. (30% of grade.)

You must complete all course requirements punctually to receive a passing grade in the course.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive accommodations, which I will gladly provide, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

# **\*Agenda\***

The course has three segments. We'll adjust the time devoted to each segment according to the class's needs and interests.

## **Segment I. *Situations***

### **A.) Indigenous**

Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*.

Powers, *Yuwipi*.

Discussion: Sign and symbol. Myth and ritual. The Shaman. Spiritual and borderline experiences. Sweat lodge, Vision Quest, Healing.

Meyeroff, *Peyote Hunt*.

Discussion: Beauty and Being. Art/Work and Religion. Domains (personal, familiar, communal, public). History in Myth. The Quest.

### **B.) Modern**

Sandars, *Gilgamesh*.

Discussion: Origins of the American Hero. Fear of death and the quest for immortality.  
Woman:Nature = Man:Culture? Ecocatastrophe.  
View excerpts of *Terminator*.

### **C.) Mad**

Rhodes, *Outsider Art*.

*Fluxus Portal*. [www.fluxus.org](http://www.fluxus.org)

Discussion: Notions of sanity and madness. Institutions. Commodification.

## Segment II. *In and Around the Middle Kingdom*

Chan, *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. (Page numbers, TBA.)

Discussion: Confucius, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, T'ang Dynasty Poetry.

Du, *The Tale of Kieu*.

Discussion: "Yin" civilization. The Female hero. Beauty. Karma.

*The Scent of Green Papayas*.

## Segment III. *American Barbarism*

Ellison, *Invisible Man*.

Discussion: The Anti-hero. Jazz, "Signifying," and the dozens. Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey.

Postcards from lynchings. Randall Johnson, *The Debt*.

View excerpts of *Boys in the Hood*.

Kerouac, *On the Road*.

Ovid, Metamorphoses: Pigmalion, Tereus, Procne and Philomela.

Ridley Scott, *Thelma and Louise*.

Snyder, *No Nature*.

Discussion: Beat and Counter-cultures. TV and Suburbia. Violence and indifference.

Appropriation vs. theft. "White Indians." Gaia. Building a house. The nick of time.